



film the police guidebook



Journalismfund Europe



1st edition-February 2026

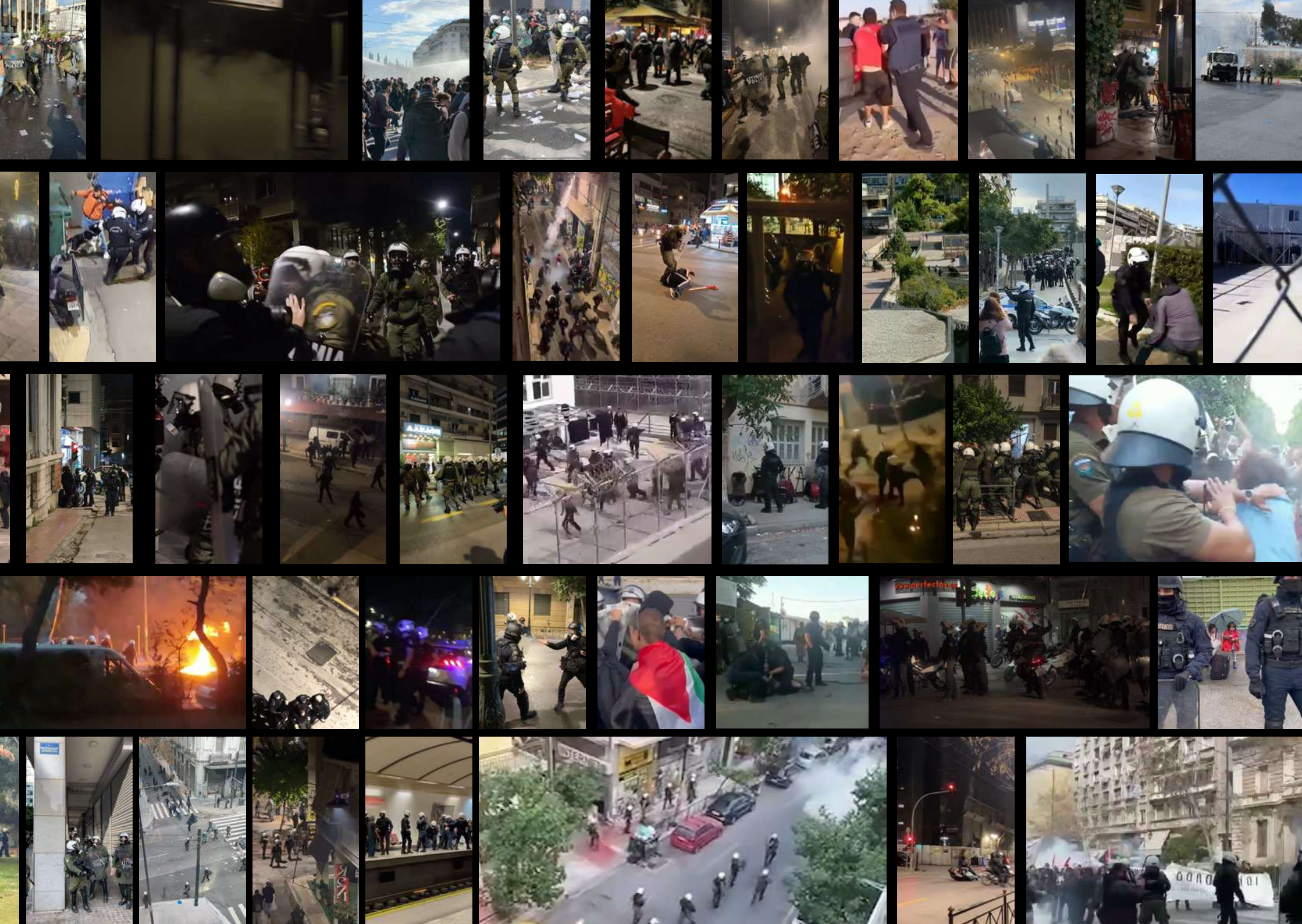
Copyright 2026 © CopwatchGR

disclaimer

Please note that the policies and practices of the authorities are constantly evolving. This guide was prepared and presented in early 2026. For the most up-to-date and reliable information, consult trusted legal advisors and relevant organisations. As regards the legal framework, this guide applies exclusively to Greece and should not be used as a reference for the legal systems of other countries.

contents

6	.....	Preface
9	.....	Legal framework
		Basic legal framework
		GDPR and personal data
		Recording
		Storage / archiving
		Publication
		Criminal offences you may be exposed to
		Recording of citizens by the police
21	.....	Preparation
		7 preparation tips
		Encryption
24	.....	Action
		Rec
		Valuable elements
		Do's & Don'ts
		Filming in Teams
		Internet shutdown/slowdown
		Leaving the field
		Debrief
49	.....	Transfer and Archiving of audiovisual material
		Transfer-storage-archiving
		Metadata
		Secure file deletion
53	.....	Film The Police platform
58	.....	Can the police...?" Frequently Asked Questions
62	.....	Self-care
66	.....	Legal appendix
80	.....	Credits





preface

The Police Violence/Misconduct Observatory Copwatch GR was founded in November 2020, amid a period of COVID-19 curfews and a few months after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. With the founding of Copwatch GR, we picked up a red thread that was unfolding globally: independent monitoring initiatives, counter-information, counter-forensics, community journalism, citizen journalism, and new forms of resistance and civil disobedience, such as filming police activity. At the core of these participatory political practices lies the demand for the collective production of truth and public discourse.

The spread of smartphones has enabled more people to document and expose state and private crimes and human rights violations. Videos and photographs have emerged as a digital tool/medium/weapon for the production of evidence and, consequently, for self-defence against state violence. Eyewitnesses have filmed bombings, environmental destruction, police violence/misconduct, and more. Contributing to an unprecedented primary production of material, which, in turn, created new challenges in management and opened up new possibilities in the social struggle for justice.

Police violence/misconduct, as part of broader state violence, does not consist solely in the physical blow of the baton, but is also directed against any evidence that such violence took place. It criminalises memory, the circulation of images, and alternative narratives. It criminalises the presence and the gaze of bodies that refuse to move on with their lives or look the other way. It is precisely this "simple," yet essential, observant presence that makes the foundations of state violence tremble.

From the very first period of Copwatch GR's operation, we encouraged our digital community to film incidents of police violence/misconduct. We researched the legislative framework and conducted our first experiments with proper field-recording practices. We then focused on the transfer and archiving of audiovisual material. We were neither professional journalists nor researchers; nevertheless, we immersed ourselves in the knowledge embedded in journalistic and research methodologies.

We listened closely to the social and political needs that had emerged in our context. Both the data and lived experience leave no room for doubt. The internal self-control mechanisms of the police are designed not to function, and

impunity within the judicial system is endemic. On this basis, we articulate our proposal for a community-based/social oversight of the Hellenic Police.

The Film The Police handbook is a first systematic attempt to transmit the knowledge and experience we gained during our first five years of operation with regard to documenting and evidencing police violence/misconduct. We are publishing a basic methodology for the safest and most well-documented possible recording of police violence/misconduct through video in Greece. We aim to disseminate this knowledge both through this guide and through in-person workshops. We acknowledge the evolving nature of our methodology; therefore, a central goal of these meetings is the creation of a community that

negotiates and continuously updates this method.

The creation of the Film The Police platform was conceived, on the one hand, as a means to collect audiovisual material in a way that meets, to the greatest extent possible, the standards required to stand in a courtroom in defence of victims of police violence/misconduct. On the other hand, it enables us to collect data in such a way as to move beyond the initial stage of highlighting isolated incidents and towards the analysis of patterns. Finally, the simultaneous mapping and publication of audiovisual material on the platform creates a living archive and nourishes collective memory.

legal framework





important

The legal appendix of the guide aims at providing general information and does not constitute individualised legal advice. Each recording, archiving, and publication of an incident has its own particularities, and this guide cannot safeguard you against police repression for any of the above practices. Certainly, however, the knowledge it provides will allow you to reduce your exposure to it.

Greece is one of the EU countries in which the operation of image recording systems in public space is permitted under conditions and only by a public authority. Any discussion regarding the framework and the limits of the lawful operation of private cameras in public space is conducted under the scope of personal data legislation and is extremely strict. In this matter, three rights come into conflict: freedom of expression and of the press and the protection of the individual's personal data.

Article 9A of the Constitution provides that:

"Everyone has the right to protection from the collection, processing, and use, especially by electronic means, of their personal data, as the law provides. The protection of

personal data is ensured by an independent authority, which is established and operates, as the law provides."

While the recording of an individual's image remains technically and legally "processing of personal data" due to the possibility of identification, the legal protection of confidentiality differs depending on whether the information remains private or has become public. Thus, although the recording of the image of police officers during the exercise of their duties formally constitutes data processing, the legal protection of their confidentiality is drastically reduced, since their action in public space constitutes information that has become public. Systematic recording by citizens does not constitute an unlawful interferen-

ce with privacy, but a necessary balancing in favour of freedom of expression and the public interest for ensuring the accountability of the authorities, as well as a counterbalance to the possibility that the law gives to the police to proactively record citizens in public spaces. In this framework, the criminal protection of the data in question is weakened, since the action of the authorities is by definition publicised and exposed to the social environment, removing any notion of confidentiality. On the contrary, recording becomes unlawful when it escapes the con-

trol of the police as a service-repressive mechanism and intrudes into purely private moments, such as, for example, the videotaping of a police officer during a break in a private space or of their personal telephone conversations that are not related to their service. Ultimately, the legality of recording by citizens is determined on a case-by-case basis, with reference to the contribution to public discussion and the control of state arbitrariness, prevailing over the protection of the image of the public official.

Basic relevant legislative acts

Constitution of Greece

Article 14 – Freedom of expression / freedom of the press
Article 9A – Protection of personal data

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

Article 10 – Freedom of expression
Article 8 – Right to private life

GDPR / Law 4624/2019: General Data Protection Regulation

Art. 28, Law 4624/2019: Processing and freedom of expression and information
Art. 29: Processing of personal data for archiving purposes in the public interest
Art. 30: Processing of personal data for scientific or historical research purposes or for the compilation and maintenance of statistical data

personal data

Personal data is all information relating to an identified or identifiable person, who is referred to as the data subject. Personal data includes information such as: name, address, identity card number, passport number, income, cultural profile, internet protocol (IP) address, data kept by hospitals or doctors (for the exclusive purpose of identifying a person for medical reasons).

The following personal data is considered "sensitive" and is subject to stricter conditions of processing:

personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, membership in a trade union, genetic data, biometric data processed solely for the purpose of identifying an individual, data concerning health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation.

gdpr

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the European legal framework that defines how individuals' personal data within the EU must be collected, stored, and processed, with the aim of strengthening privacy and security. It introduces principles such as transparency, data minimisation, and accountability, while providing individuals with rights such as access, rectification, erasure ("right to be forgotten"), and portability of their data. It also obliges organisations to take appropriate technical and organisational measures and provides for significant fines for violations.

Law 4624/2019 incorporated the General Data Protection Regulation into Greek legislation (also known as GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation) and, together with criminal legislation, defines the framework within which a person may act when proceeding to the recording, archiving, and publication of incidents of police violence/misconduct. Thus, in Article 28, the processing of data for journalistic purposes, as well as for purposes of academic, artistic, or literary expression, is permitted under certain conditions.

when are you allowed to record an incident?

a) When the data subject has provided their explicit consent (usually difficult in cases of police violence)

b) When it concerns personal data that has been manifestly made public by the data subject themselves,

c) When the recording concerns matters of broader public interest or when it concerns personal data of public figures

d) When the recording–processing is limited to the necessary extent, with care for special categories of data / criminal data.

The recording of police officers in the performance of their duties in a public space is, in principle, lawful and falls under freedom of expression and information; however, rules of data protection, proportionality, and respect for the privacy of third parties apply.

Thus, when we discuss whether you have the right to record behaviours of police officers that you consider illegal, the key concepts are

- i. the "legitimate interest" and
- ii. the "public interest"

It must be established that the recording concerns a public event of interest to the public and/or that you have a legitimate interest in filming it.

Legitimate interest is one of the core concepts of law. Simply put, it is the "link" that connects a person to a specific situation and gives them the right to seek legal protection or to take a certain action. Within the framework of personal data protection law, the recording of images is lawful if it is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interest pursued by the person making the recording, unless that interest is overridden by the interests or the fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject that require the protection of personal data. A mere interest or curiosity is not sufficient; the interest must be personal, direct, and present (i.e. it must exist at the given moment).

The policing of a demonstration–protest action–activism, the commission of criminal offences by police officers, and in general illegal, abusive, offensive, or excessive police behaviour within the framework of their service are circumstances that justify the legitimate interest of the participant or the public interest.

Have you assessed that something from the above exists?

You may film. Especially in the case of recording with the subject of police arbitrariness, you should prefer targeted, occasional shots and always with some cause.

Nevertheless, if you are in a situation where nothing reprehensible is happening but it is very likely that something may suddenly happen, you may record continuously, taking care afterwards to delete the material that was not useful.

On the other hand, the recording of private moments of police officers or the recording of activities unrelated to their official capacity are actions that are prohibited by legislation and should be avoided. It is important to know that the law establishes different levels of pro-

storage & archiving

After recording comes the storage and possibly the classification of the material you recorded. At this point, Law 4624/2019 imposes certain obligations on you. Thus,

If you keep an archive containing data, you will need to take precautions to minimise any potential harm resulting from the leakage of individuals' personal data in case someone gains access to your archive or the device on which this data is stored is stolen or lost [the guide provides some directions below on how such material should be stored].

In order to minimise the above risk, you should proceed with the encryption of the files and the pseudonymisation of the data.

tection for different subjects. Thus, a Foreign Press correspondent or a newspaper journalist is expressly protected to a higher degree than an "ordinary" citizen. Nevertheless, with the explosion of the transmission of information and images by social media users, legislation and case law tend to treat citizens who record events systematically or maintain counter-information accounts as journalists when they behave as such [thus, however, corresponding obligations arise].

You must at all times be able to enable any person related to your recordings to exercise the rights granted to them by Law 4624/2019.

These are:

- To be able to object to their recording
- To be able to request the deletion of their data from your databases
- To be able to request the restriction of the processing of their data in your databases
- To be able to request the correction of the content of their data
- To be able to be informed at any time about the data that you possess that concerns them
- To be able to have free access to their personal data that is contained in your databases.

publication

When you publish a recording, you must pay attention to the accompanying comments in your post. The post must not have an offensive, pretextual, or satirical character, so that it is not considered defamation or slander. If, however, you make a post with an artistic character and purpose, you have greater freedom for mocking or demeaning comments.

In general, when you publish an incident, you should follow some basic principles of "journalistic" ethics in order not to expose yourself to the risk of criminal prosecution. Some of these are:

The choices made during editing — in the placement of information and means of communication next to one another — must not substantially distort the underlying reality.

You should inform the potential audience with information regard-

ing the aims of the video, so that the material is not inadvertently used for the purposes and politics of others.

The purpose of your publication should be clear, since many things depend on it. There are various purposes for which you may wish to publish an incident: legal defence, journalism, justice, community organising, etc. Many of the decisions you make during the editing of the material will depend on your own perspective and the purpose of your work. You must provide your audience with the context and explanations for the choices you made, so that the audience can better understand why something is included and why something else is not.

Again, you should avoid references to events that pertain to the private life of the recorded person and are unrelated to the issue.

attention

If you record an incident in a public space, you should follow the "Do no harm" principle for demonstrators or victims of police arbitrariness who appear in the recording. For example, if a third person is recorded in your footage committing criminal offences, your publication may expose them to police repression, and you should not publish unless you ensure that you will not cause harm.



criminal offences to which a person who records police violence may be exposed:

Security forces systematically attempt to cover up their unlawful actions. In doing so, they often criminalise the behaviour of people who have witnessed police abuse and tried to document it. The most common offences someone may face are:

Art. 38 Law 4624/2019: Criminal sanctions of the law on personal data

This is the main offence that may be attributed to you if you record without a legitimate interest, when no event of public interest is taking place, or if you record personal data without the consent of the person recorded [especially if the data relate to their private life—even if you are recording in a public space].

Art. 370A, Law 4619/2019: Illegal recording of an oral conversation

This offence concerns the covert recording of a “non-public” conversation. For this specific offence, the Areios Pagos [the country’s Supreme Court] has held that the prohibition of “unfair/illicit filming” concerns acts of private life—not acts carried out in the course of duty and subject to public oversight and criticism.

Art. 363 Penal Code: Aggravated/Criminal defamation (slander)

This offence may be attributed to you if you accompany your recording with comments that are false and defamatory. It is critical that you can prove that your comment corresponds to the truth and that your character-

isation is not slanderous but rather “sharp criticism.” Otherwise, you risk criminal prosecution and conviction.

Art. 361 Penal Code: Insult

Insulting someone is a criminal offence. Insult does not have to be done with words; it can also be done through gestures. For example, if you publish yourself making sexual gestures directed at a specific person, you have committed the offence of insult “by act.”

Insult must be directed at a specific person or persons. Thus, insulting a professional category in general is not criminally punishable. The same applies to the police: insulting the police in general or police officers in general is not a criminal offence. It is worth noting, however, that police unions have been strongly and methodically trying to render the word “μπάτσος” (“cop” as a slur) illegal, by taking legal action against people who use it publicly.

Article 8 – Law 3090/2002: Recording inside a courtroom

Recording inside a courtroom, in any way, of anyone—even a police officer on duty—is completely prohibited: don’t do it.

Article 184: Incitement to commit crimes, violence, or discord

This article requires great caution because:

A social media post with radical/revolutionary/ACAB content can easily be considered as “provoking or inciting the commission of a misdemeanour or felony and thus endangering public order / provoking or inciting citizens to violence against each other or to mutual discord.”

It is a common practice to “out” fascists, police officers, etc. by exposing their personal data; if those persons then suffer consequences from actions against them, the person who carried out the “outing” may be punished with an even heavier penalty.

Article 169: Disobedience

This offence usually concerns passive non-compliance with police orders. It may be attributed to you if you continue recording despite police ordering you to stop, or if you record and then leave even though they ordered you to stop, etc.

civil liability – compensation lawsuits

Another legal risk when someone posts videos of police arbitrariness is that they may face civil claims from the “affected” police officer. A police officer who believes that their personality rights have been infringed may bring a lawsuit for infringement of personality rights and claim monetary compensation for the “moral damage” suffered [Article 5, sole paragraph, of Law 1178/1981]. If the social media account is con-

sidered “digital press” or the post is deemed “journalistic,” a formal extrajudicial notice must first be sent, calling on the person who published the material to rectify, correct, or delete it within a short time frame. The amounts awarded usually range from €3,000 to €20,000, depending on the reach of the post and the severity of the infringement, although in extreme cases of defamation, they may be higher.

There is no guarantee that a case file will not be opened against you, no matter what you do: unfortunately, at any moment, from documenting police abuse, you may end up experiencing it yourself. The only thing within your control—and what this guide can help with—is to minimise your exposure and reduce the impact if you are targeted.

SO:

During recording:

- Make sure you do not obstruct police actions with your body.
- Make it clear—either verbally or with some sign—that you are recording.

After recording:

- Follow the archiving rules required by GDPR:
 - I. Anonymisation
 - II. Encryption
 - III. Enable recorded persons to exercise their GDPR rights [objection, correction, deletion, information, notification, access].
- Take security measures to minimise the likelihood of leakage/theft of personal data and to reduce consequences if a leak occurs (see also below).
- If you recorded material where nothing happened, it is best to delete it.

During publication:

- Make sure you follow the basic principles of “journalistic” ethics mentioned above.
- Make sure no third person is harmed/implicated.
- If the incident you recorded concerns someone who was arrested, try to contact their lawyer(s).

important note

It is well known that in Greece, migrant women and refugees are primary targets of police abuse. Border violence and confinement in “Controlled Living Centres” combine a regime of lawlessness with the application of dystopian technological tools against them. In border zones and in detention centres, recording an incident exposes the recorder to a greater risk of criminalisation, as they may face additional charges under the pretext of national security [espionage, the legal framework for Controlled Living Centres, etc.]. A legal analysis of the risks in these cases cannot be covered within the scope of this guide.

what about the reverse? when and under what conditions can the police record me in public?

Although this goes beyond the purposes of this guide, here is some information.

There are three main legal instruments governing the recording of people in public spaces by security forces:

Law 3917/2011, which defines when video surveillance in public spaces is permitted

Presidential Decree 75/2020, which sets rules around the use of surveillance and recording systems

by the police for evidentiary purposes, and

Law 4703/2020 on public outdoor assemblies and the use of surveillance systems by the police during them.

Although the current legal framework sets limits and safeguards, its application in practice often fails to curb police arbitrariness and to truly protect rights.

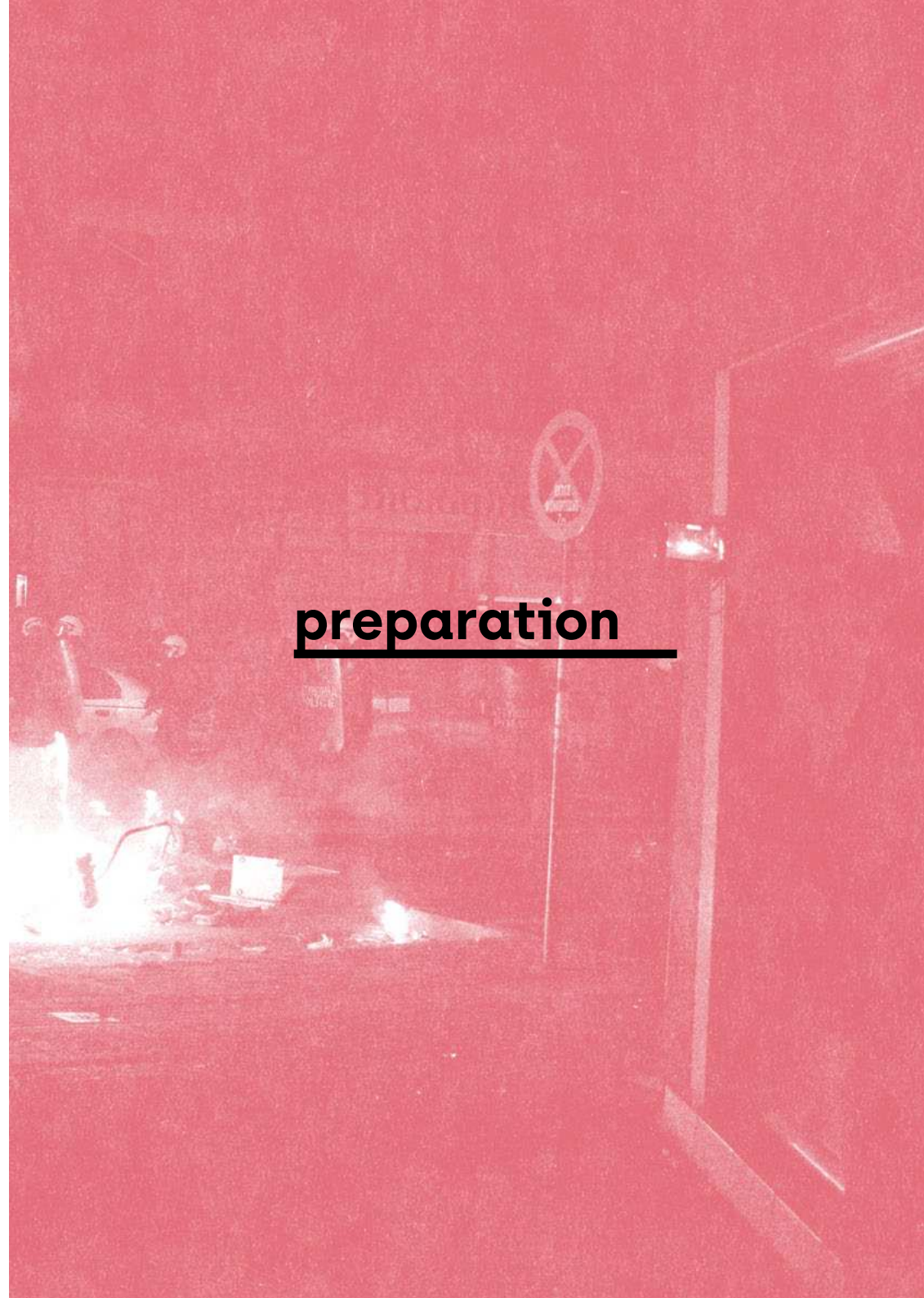
Law 3907/2011 provides that the processing of personal data by police authorities must be necessary and proportionate to the pursued purpose. From the perspective of the person being recorded, the key question is who decides this "necessity" and by what substantive criteria. The vague invocation of crime prevention or suppression can easily become a pretext for excessive data collection, without clear and individualised justification. In this way, anyone risks being treated as a potential suspect simply because they move through public spaces.

Presidential Decree 70/2020, although formally setting rules for the use of cameras and other recording means, leaves significant room for interpretation for the police. The prohibition of generalised and continuous surveillance has not, to date, prevented the Helle-

nic Police from carrying out extensive recording of demonstrations and routine police operations.

The safeguards provided seem more theoretical than substantive, especially when there is no clear information about who is being recorded, how long the material is kept, and how a person can exercise their rights of access or deletion.

Finally, particular concern is raised by Law 4703/2020 on public outdoor assemblies. Although the law recognises that recording should not deter the exercise of the right to assemble, in practice, the presence of cameras and systematic filming of demonstrators has an intimidating effect. Of course, continuous movement activity and demonstrations have limited the law's implementation, but not to the point where one could say it has "fallen into disuse."



7 preparation tips before recording

1. Secure your devices

- For your smartphone, don't use Face Recognition or fingerprint unlock, because it's easy for the police to force you to unlock it. Choose a six-digit passcode.
- Delete sensitive information that could put you or others at risk if your phone is confiscated.
- For your computer, enable a password of at least 14 characters including letters, numbers, and symbols.

2. If you use cloud storage, make sure automatic backups are enabled

If you lose your device or it is confiscated, you won't lose your files. Be careful, though: cloud servers carry risks of breaches or provider cooperation with authorities, so be cautious about storing sensitive material there for a long time. Ideally, delete files from the cloud after saving them at home.

3. Make sure you have enough storage space

On your smartphone or camera. Video—especially HD/4K—fills memory quickly.

4. Charge your batteries

If you're going to a mobilisation that may last hours, bring a **power bank**.

5. Enable automatic date/time and geolocation (GPS) recording

Your footage is easier to verify when **date, time, and location** are recorded.

6. If you plan to attend a mobilisation, set up a private communication channel

Create one with close people who will also participate.

- Set a time window in which it would be good for others to hear from you; if you get separated, they should check in and contact a lawyer if you are arrested or another problem arises.
- For secure communication, use Signal. Signal is a widely used encrypted messaging app.



7. Keep a lawyer's number in your contacts

It's good to always have a lawyer's phone number saved.



encryption

There are various ways to encrypt data. We propose solutions that are user-friendly, provide basic protection for your data, and that we have tested ourselves. For full installation and usage guides, visit the websites of the recommended applications.

For computers, hard drives, and USB flash drives

VeraCrypt: A free, open-source disk encryption software. With VeraCrypt, you can encrypt files, folders, and entire hard drives.

Password storage

KeePassXC: A password manager that allows you to securely store your passwords in an encrypted (offline) database.

File sharing

OnionShare: A tool for sharing files with increased privacy by creating a temporary, private link.

Browsing

Tor Browser: A web browser that routes your traffic through the Tor network to reduce tracking and hides your activity to your real IP address.

VPN

Mullvad: A VPN service that encrypts traffic from your device to the VPN server and "hides" your IP address from websites.

Communication

Signal: A messaging and calling application with end-to-end encryption, offering more secure communication.

Cloud encryption

Cryptomator: A tool for locally encrypting files and folders before (or while) they are synced to cloud services (e.g. Google Drive, Dropbox).



just before you press rec

You're ready to raise your phone to film an incident of police violence. Before you press rec, **assess the risk one last time.**

Keep in mind that **gender, skin colour, ethnic identity, your mental state, migration status, or prior contact with the criminal justice system** increase your vulnerability to the criminal/court system.

Are you alone? Then the risk of being targeted by the police increases.

Assess the surrounding space. Are there exits—for example, if you get trapped during a march?

If you assess the risk as too high to film, **memory testimony and written notes are also valuable.** Your very presence is the most important factor in making the police feel that they cannot act with impunity.





rec

A video tells a story. Ideally, someone who wasn't present can understand from your video what really happened. The goal of properly documenting police violence on video is that the content of the video captures **what, who, how, where, when, and why.**

Examples of documented incidents:

- Beatings of protesters
- Extensive use of tear gas in a densely packed crowd
- Direct firing of a stun grenade
- Traffic code violations by police officers
- Body searches of women conducted by male police officers
- Obstruction of journalistic work
- Obstruction of medical staff from providing medical care
- Violence against lawyers / legal observers
- Sexist / racist remarks by police officers in public spaces

tip

Often, videos showing police violence are not taken into account in court because officers claim something happened **before** filming started that "justified" the use of force. For example, they may claim the victim attacked them or tried to free themselves or another person being taken in/arrested. Ideally, start filming **how a situation develops before any use of force.** If you believe a situation may escalate, start filming immediately.



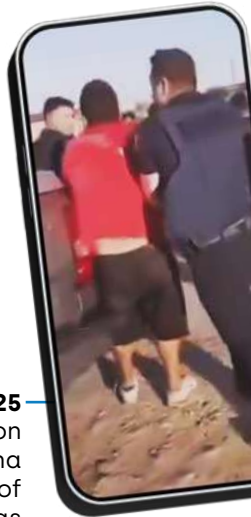
7 October 2025

Beating of a demonstrator by MAT riot police forces



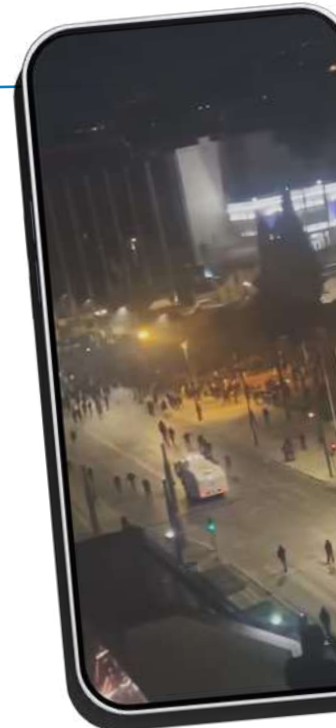
27 April 2025

Use of tear gas and beatings of citizens who participated in a political event at Strefi Hill.



14 July 2025

OPKE operation in the Roma settlement of Gerakas



7 March 2025

Dispersal of a gathering at Syntagma using tear gas, stun grenades, and a water cannon.



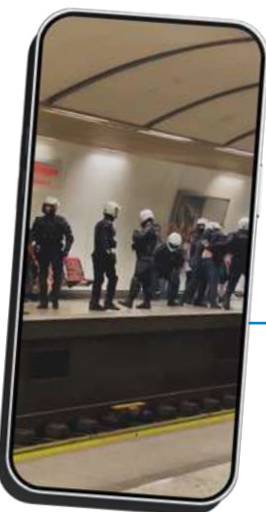
22 March 2024

YAT attack on detainees on hunger strike at the Corinth detention centre.



7 September 2025

YAT attack with stun grenades on a bar.



6 December 2023
Vandalism of an apartment building entrance and tear gas thrown indoors by YAT forces



16 June 2023
Arrest of a demonstrator on the platform of the "Panepistimio" metro station



19 August 2022
YAT and OPKE raid on the Elaionas camp



9 February 2022
Violent arrest of a migrant in Vathi Square



valuable elements

Your primary concern is to focus on what is happening in front of you. But some details add depth and are useful for verification, further investigation, publication, and usefulness in court.

identification markings on police uniforms

The discussion about the obligation for police to wear identification on their uniforms—for identification, oversight, and accountability—goes back a long time and resurfaces after serious incidents of police violence and the public outrage that follows.

Therefore, there is a high likelihood that you will not be able to capture identifying details on officers' uniforms. However, the **absence** of identifiers is itself a detail worth recording, to highlight the pattern of covering up police violence.

But to this day [January 2026], no government has shown the will to implement this measure universally, with the result that many officers have escaped potential conviction due to the inability to identify them. The implementation of the measure also appears to face resistance from within the police, with officers operating according to unwritten internal codes of mutual cover-ups. The result is that some wear identifiers, some do not; some identifiers are covered with stickers; others are unreadable due to size, or they are hidden under other parts of the uniform.

According to Decision No. 7012/6/103-oz', published on 01/04/2021 in the Government Gazette, police units are obliged to bear "identity-indicating insignia" at the following points on their uniforms.

The decision does not mention the police units DIAS and EKAM.

valuable elements

YAT (formerly MAT) (Public Order Restoration Subdirectorate) and YMET (Public Order Measures Subdirectorate)

A special identity insignia consisting of a combination of the number of the unit [platoon] to which the officer belongs and the sequential number assigned to each member of that unit. It is worn on the back of the helmet.



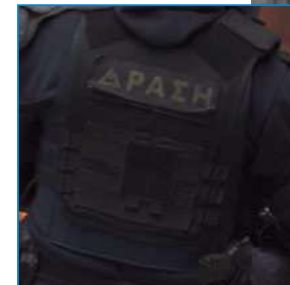
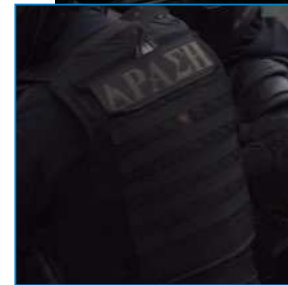
Note:

The various symbols worn on the helmets of YAT and YMET officers serve for internal recognition among officers and do not constitute an official identity insignia.



Special Action Groups (DRASI)

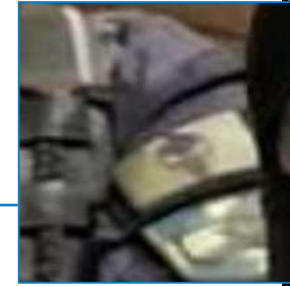
A special identity insignia consisting of the capital letter "Δ," indicating the unit it represents, the unit number, and the member's sequential number. The two numbers are separated by a dash (e.g., Δ20-1). Below the identity insignia, in the form of a removable attachment, the word "DRASI" is displayed. It is worn on the upper part of the rear side of the torso protective equipment.



valuable elements

Crime Prevention and Suppression Units (O.P.K.E.)

In the middle of the upper part of the sleeve cuffs, and at a distance of 1 cm from the point where they are sewn to the main body of the garment, a special identity insignia consisting of: the capital letter "K" (indicating the unit), the **unit number**, and the **member's serial number**. The two numbers are separated by a hyphen.

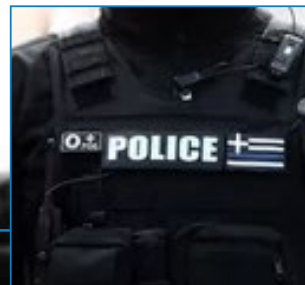


Often officers also wear other personal insignia on their uniforms, such as patches, which are normally prohibited under the official regulations. Recording these elements matters for studying the internal code of police subculture—the so-called **thin blue line**—which, as has been highlighted in Greece and internationally, is deeply connected with nationalism and fascism, as well as codes of cover-ups among police officers.

Senior Constables, Deputy Senior Constables, Constables, Special Guards:

A plate made of stainless steel or another suitable silver-coloured material, engraved in black with the registry number (A.G.M.S.) of the uniformed personnel [senior constable, deputy senior constable, constable, special guard]. It is worn at the base of the sleeve epaulettes.

Often officers also wear other personal insignia on their uniforms, such as patches, which are normally prohibited under the official regulation. Recording these elements matters for studying the internal code of police subculture—the so-called thin blue line—which, as has been highlighted in Greece and internationally, is deeply connected with nationalism and fascism, as well as codes of cover-ups among police officers. It also reveals a tendency for the institution of the police to become autonomous from state oversight.



valuable elements



the surroundings

such as streets, signs, monuments, distinctive buildings and shops, and graffiti. These are useful for verifying the location, time, and context of a video.

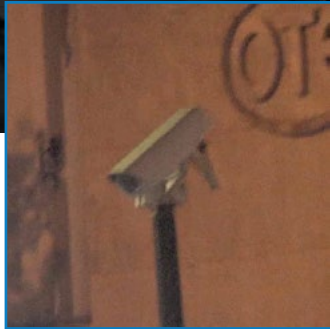


valuable elements



other CCTV cameras

in the area—on homes, shops, or public cameras. Footage from nearby cameras can be useful for further investigation of an incident. In many cases of police violence, there have been suspicions of police seizing nearby-camera footage to cover things up. Often, during the preliminary investigation, police also “omit” collecting such material.



From an investigation by Cop-watch GR: two closed-circuit camera systems from shops near the site of the killing of Kostas Fragoulis by a police officer from the DIAS unit on 5 December 2022.

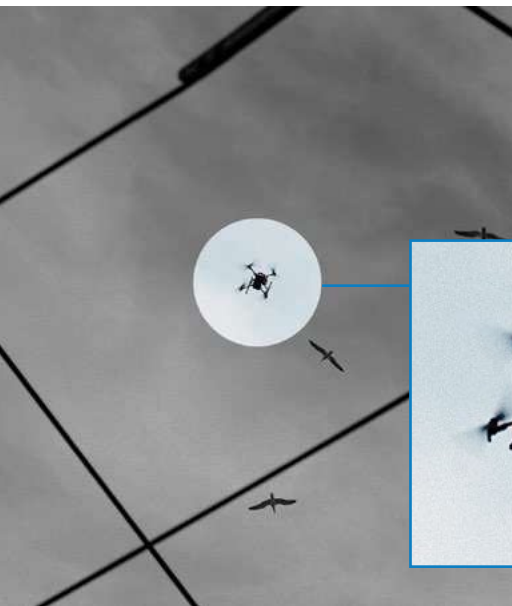
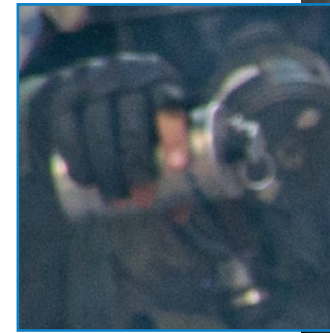


Image from the pursuit of Kostas Fragoulis by two motorcycles of the DIAS unit. The image comes from a camera of a nearby shop.

valuable elements

equipment and technical means

used by the police: tear gas, stun grenades, pepper spray, firearms, portable cameras, bodycams, batons, water cannon and drones.



valuable elements



record police behaviour after the incident/escalation ends

[e.g., do they remain, allow access, block journalists].



recording formations and tactics

such as the use of cordons during a march, coordinated arrest operations by the DRASI unit, or the video recording of civilians—is invaluable for analysing their overall operational conduct.





dos and don'ts

Stay calm and focus on the event.

Inform the police officers involved that you are recording. Do not intervene. What counts as "interference" is subjective from a police perspective, so it is best to keep a distance of at least about one meter from the incident while recording.

Move parallel to events. keep a steady pace; don't run in panic. keep the smartphone steady. if you struggle, fix your gaze on a point on the screen.

Keep the camera or smartphone close to your body to reduce the risk of it being grabbed or damaged.

Film in horizontal [landscape] mode with a wide-angle view. Avoid tight close-ups, which often lack context [such as what other officers are doing].

**Use steady, continuous shots.
Avoid sudden zooming**

Do not comment while filming. Commentary can distract you, cause you to miss important details, and reduce the credibility of the footage. After the incident, if you consider it necessary to provide additional information, stick to objective facts and avoid expressing emotions. State the time, date, and location, and add your personal testimony.

Avoid abrupt movements. Sudden movements or reaching into a pocket to grab your phone may escalate tension or worsen the situation.

Were you injured by a police attack?

Your testimony and the proper documentation of your injury are extremely important for bringing the incident to light and can be crucial in a courtroom.

1. Make sure to record your testimony.

If you are unable to do so yourself due to a serious injury, ask a trusted person to help you. Below you will find an example of a properly structured and complete testimony:

8 December 2025, 19:00

On 6 December 2025, I participated in a demonstration marking the anniversary of the killing of Alexandros Grigoropoulos. At around 21:00, riot police units [MAT] attacked the demonstration at the intersection of Panepistimiou and Emmanouil Benaki streets, using tear gas and stun grenades. During the attack, I was struck on the head with a baton. As a result, I sustained a wound to the back of my head. I became dizzy from the blow and fell to the ground. My friend helped me up, and we left the area.

At 21:35, we went to the emergency department of the General Hospital of Athens "Georgios Gennimatas." At 22:15, I was examined by doctors. I was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury, and the doctors proceeded to suture the wound. At 22:30, a brain CT scan was performed, which revealed an epidural hematoma. At 22:45, an intravenous line was placed, I was given fluids, and blood tests were conducted. Additionally, a basic neurological examination was performed and was negative. At 00:15 on 7 December, a second round of blood tests was carried out, and it was determined that my haemoglobin levels were stable. I was hospitalised for 24 hours, until 23:00 on 7 December. Throughout my hospitalisation, I experienced severe headaches, dizziness, and insomnia. The same symptoms, though milder, continue to this day."

2. Make sure to properly photograph your injury.

Take many photographs. Ideally, under strong natural light, photograph your injuries from multiple angles. Take a full-body photo. Take medium and close-up shots. In close-up shots, place an everyday object (e.g., a coin or a lighter) next to the injury (bruise, abrasion, or wound) to indicate its size. Finally, note exactly when the photographs were taken.



filming in teams & collective documentation during a protest

It is helpful to always have one or more collaborators with you, with or without a camera. One person films, while another observes the surroundings and helps you move safely while recording. Your collaborator can also point out additional elements worth documenting. Keep each other within your field of vision at all times for safety.

- **Capture an establishing shot and the horizon**

- **Film in a 360° circle**

- **Capture wide shots from all four directions**

- **Capture medium shots from all four directions**

- **Capture close-up shots of key evidentiary elements**

If there is a risk of arrest and your material is in danger, you can hand the memory card to a collaborator for safekeeping. Insert an empty card and continue recording.

If more people are present with the intention of documenting, record simultaneously from multiple angles. Multi-angle footage can provide a more comprehensive view, contribute to the reconstruction of an incident, and support the creation of 3D models.





internet shutdown / slowdown

It may not have been implemented in Greece yet, but in many cases—from India, Indonesia, Nepal, Ukraine, Yemen, and Palestine—state authorities have proceeded to internet shutdowns or slowdowns. In such a situation, you may need to create backups from your phone in the field with limited or no internet, and without being able to use a laptop.

Your options for making backups are:

1. Use **on-the-go drives** (a category of USB flash drives that connect directly to your phone). Or use a cable that connects an external hard drive to your phone.

2. Use a **wireless hard drive or USB stick**. The advantage of wireless drives is that multiple users can connect simultaneously; the disadvantage is that they need charging, unlike wired ones that draw power from the phone. Another drawback is that they don't allow encryption via the phone. What you can do instead is encrypt files before transferring them using apps like **RAR** — just be careful not to forget the password.

For communication during shutdowns/slowdowns, solutions based on **mesh technology** and peer-to-peer chats have recently spread, such as **bitchat**.



tips for leaving the field

After documenting an incident of police violence/abuse, your first and main priority is to leave the area, with your personal safety in mind, the protection of your material, and possibly the protection of third parties who may be exposed by it.

If there is a risk that the police may confiscate your mobile device or the camera with which you recorded the police violence:

- **Remove the memory card from the device and hide it somewhere until you are safely back home, or give it to a friend. Be careful: memory cards are small and easy to lose, and they are also fragile, with a risk of losing important files. Only remove them from recording devices if there is a real risk of confiscation. Ideally, store them in their protective case.**

- **Make sure your cloud backup is enabled and delete the material from the device (see Preparation Tips – encryption).**

- **Upload the material directly from the field to the Film The Police platform (see below) and then delete it.**

If you have material that could potentially lead to criminal liability for other individuals and you believe there is a high likelihood that it may fall into the hands of the police, then delete it / format your SD card as you leave the area.

If you must delete the material, try to send it first to a trusted person via an end-to-end encrypted application such as Signal. This is not an ideal solution, as such applications remove embedded metadata from the file (see below), but it is preferable to losing a valuable video.

If you are at a march or mobilisation and you are carrying a camera, keep it visible on your body when leaving. Experience has shown that the police perceive this as a deterrent factor and are less likely to harass you. If possible, leave the area together with other photojournalists.



debrief

After you catch your breath, it's good to take some time to discuss. Every action is only as good as its preparation—and its debrief.

· **did you forget anything in preparation?**

· **what went well in the filming technique? what should you improve?**

· **was there a moment your safety was threatened due to a mistake? what would you do differently?**

· **were there ethical dilemmas [e.g., filming faces that weren't necessary]? how did you handle them?**



transfer & archiving



transfer – storage – archiving

You filmed an incident of police violence. You returned home safely and are ready to transfer/archive your files.

File transfer refers to moving audiovisual material from one device or location to another. Ideally, the result is a complete, unaltered file

in its original, authentic form. If the transfer is not done correctly, videos can easily be lost, altered, corrupted, or separated from their embedded metadata. This stage requires care, because mishandling files affects later verification and ultimately their usefulness as evidence in court.

Unless you upload directly to the internet from your camera/phone, your first transfer after filming is usually uploading from the camera SD card or smartphone to a computer.

copy the raw, original video files directly to storage devices **without modifying them in any way.**

don't change the order of the files or their names.

follow the **3-2-1 backup rule:**

3: Keep three total copies of your data — the original and two backups.

2: Store the copies on two different types of media [e.g., external hard drive and laptop].

1: Keep at least one copy off-site to protect against theft, fire, or natural disasters.

Check your transfer. Don't delete material from the card/camera until you have confirmed files were copied/transferred correctly. A simple (though not foolproof) method is to check that file sizes and file counts match and play a sample of the videos.

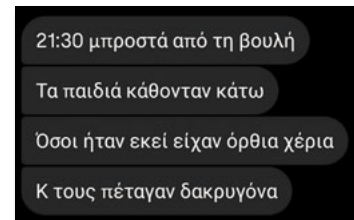
if you want to edit the video, create a copy for that purpose. always keep the original file intact!

Archiving: If you intend to maintain an archive of incidents of police violence, then see the obligations that arise under the legal framework (p. 14).

metadata

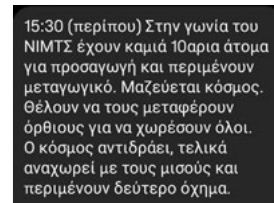
What is metadata? Metadata is "data about data." Metadata includes any information about the video itself. They may be embedded in the video file—for example, the creation time and date, location, and the smartphone/camera model. Embedded metadata is essential for verifying a video's authenticity.

```
ExifTool Version Number      : 13.26
File Name                    : C:\003.MP4
Directory                    : Users\jg... Desktop\Fragoulis
File Size                    : 67 MB
File Modification Date/Time  : 2022:12:05 12:24:02+02:00
File Access Date/Time       : 2026-01:19 13:56:12+02:00
File Inode Change Date/Time  : 2026-01:15 13:56:04+02:00
File Permissions             : -rwx-----
File Type                    : MP4
File Type Extension         : mp4
MIME Type                    : video/mp4
Major Brand                  : Sony XAVC
Minor Version                : 100.1f.ff
Compatible Brands           : XAVC, mp42, iso2
File Function Flags         : Additional tracks
Audio Track ID              : 2
Audio Codec                 : twos
Audio Attributes            : (none)
Audio Avg Bitrate           : 1.54 Mbps
Audio Max Bitrate          : 1.54 Mbps
Video Track ID              : 1
Video Codec                 : avc1
Video Attributes           : Variable bitrate, [16], [17]
Video Avg Bitrate          : 60 Mbps
Video Max Bitrate          : 60 Mbps
Video Avg Frame Rate        : 25
Video Max Frame Rate       : 25
Video Size                  : 3840x2160
Pixel Aspect Ratio          : 1:1
Media Data Size            : 67108672
Media Data Offset          : 192
Movie Header Version        : 0
Create Date                 : 2022:12:05 10:23:51
Modify Date                 : 2022:12:05 10:23:51
Time Scale                 : 90000
Duration                    : 9.12 s
```



```
GPS Coordinates             : 37 deg 59' 51.00" N, 23 deg 46' 9.84" E
Image Size                  : 1920x1088
Megapixels                  : 2.1
Avg Bitrate                 : 17.9 Mbps
GPS Latitude                : 37 deg 59' 51.00" N
GPS Longitude               : 23 deg 46' 9.84" E
Rotation                    : 90
GPS Position                : 37 deg 59' 51.00" N, 23 deg 46' 9.84" E
```

Προσαγωγή 17χρονος από αστυνομικούς με πολεμικά και παρόνομη κράτηση της	18-11-2020			ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ	MAT
Αστυνομικός σκοπός για κατά ασπίδου	24-12-2020	3.797.587.675.356.570	23.733.564.889.854.800	ΑΘΗΝΑ	Γενικός Αστυνομικός Υποσμηναγός
Επίθεση των ΜΑΤ σε ψυχορροπία	27-01-2021	4.063.633.478.833.770	22.944.429.254.250.400	ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ	MAT
Γραμματοκιβώτιο 15χρονης στο κενό από χαρτοβύβλα κρότου λάμψης	18-03-2021			ΑΘΗΝΑ	MAT
Εκδήλωση και επεαπρόβλεψη Ζακάρια Βελκουδίδου από αστυνομικούς	19-04-2021	40.832.715.262.908.600	22.940.853.768.503.200	ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ	Αστυνομικοί με πολεμικά
Παρακολούθηση διαδικασίας καταγγελίας βιολιστού	25-08-2021			ΑΘΗΝΑ	Γενικός Αστυνομικός Υποσμηναγός
Εκδήλωση αστυνομικού ως εγκέφαλος για διακίνηση ναρκωτικών	18-06-2022			ΑΘΗΝΑ	
Βία κατά διαγύρων	04-09-2022	3.788.661.657.613.310.000	2.373.492.906.303.490	ΑΘΗΝΑ	MAT
Βανδαλισμός παροβολικού του 17χρονου Χρήστου Μπαλκίτσου	12-11-2023	38.301.871.931.268.000	2.315.789.369.277.530	ΒΟΙΩΤΙΑ	ΟΠΚΕ
Βασανιστήρια σε 3χρονο κρατούμενο στην Αιμιλιανίδα	15-03-2024	381.118.992.851.307	23.744.011.167.001.500	ΑΜΥΓΔΑΛΕΙΑ	Υπηρεσίες Συντακτικής Φύλαξης



Metadata also includes information contained in a written or oral testimony sent as a supplement to the audiovisual material. Metadata also includes information extracted from audiovisual material to create a database—for example, the police unit involved, the place of detention, or the technical means used.



secure data deletion

Files that are deleted with a simple delete action are easy to recover. Many users who want to securely erase sensitive data, in order to be certain it cannot be retrieved, proceed to format memory cards and hard drives and perform multiple rounds of file "overwriting" using specialised software.

The most reliable and straightforward safeguard against the recovery of deleted material is hard-disk encryption. In this case, any digital forensic tool requires the encryption password to read anything — even if the files have been "simply" deleted.



film the police platform



film the police platform

After you transfer and archive your files, it's time to submit them through the Film The Police platform.

In the first five years of Copwatch GR's operation (2020–2025), we received the largest volume of files via Instagram direct messages. The flow of information was time-consuming, made verification and archiving much more difficult, and had significant security gaps. Instagram—as well as other social media platforms, and chats like Telegram, Signal, and WhatsApp—remove embedded metadata from videos.

The two-year anniversary of the Tempi train crime was pivotal for the conception of the platform. After we issued a call to our digital community to document police violence during the mobilisations, the response was very large. We were sent audiovisual material through all the methods mentioned above, which we barely managed to handle using our old tools and methods.

The need to create a new infrastructure had become urgent.

By creating this platform, we want to redirect people who wish to send us audiovisual material to an environment that increases our ability to verify it, and therefore increases the material's usefulness as evidence. Additionally, it facilitates archiving and linking submissions to the police violence archive we maintain. The audiovisual material you upload is stored and safeguarded on secure servers in cooperation with the Qurium Foundation, as well as on encrypted hard drives that we maintain in different physical locations. Your personal data, as well as the data of those appearing in the videos, are anonymised. Any audiovisual material that is made public is first processed by us to avoid the incrimination of third parties. Finally, the mapping/visualisation of the material and its publication create a living archive of police violence.

on the film the police platform

The **original file** is transferred along with its embedded metadata.

We can link the video directly to the primary source—you—contact you, and request clarifications.

The form you fill in helps us answer core questions in our verification protocol:

What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?

Valuable information is collected for every incident of police violence we document:

Which police unit was responsible? What technical means were used?

Were vulnerable groups targeted?

Analysing this data reveals patterns of police violence

disclaimer

The platform we created is a secure environment for uploading audiovisual material of police violence where there is a legitimate interest. It is NOT a platform for sharing sensitive information. It is NOT a whistleblowing platform. The only environment in Greece that meets the security conditions for that is greekleaks.



<https://reportersunited.gr/greekleaks/>



VIDEOS
[Add Video](#)

CONTACT DETAILS
Please provide a way to get in touch in case we need to verify the footage. Signal, email, etc.

email: eyewitness@mail.com
signal: eyewitness.20

IMAGES
[Add Image](#)

LOCATION
Where was the footage taken?

Akadimias 38, Athina 106 72, Greece

LINKS TO CONTENT
[Add Link](#)

DESCRIPTION
Please let us know if there is anything else you'd like to add, such as a description or context of the material.

I had left the march for the Tempi anniversary with my friends, and we were heading toward Omonia Metro. Then we saw motorcycles of the DRASI unit approaching a group of protesters on the opposite sidewalk. They attacked them without provocation and violently arrested one young person.

DATE AND TIME
When was the footage taken? Be as specific as you can

02/28/2025, 06:50 PM

ARE YOU THE AUTHOR OF THIS FOOTAGE? *

No
 Yes

POLICE UNIT/SERVICE

- Border Guard Services
- DIAS Unit (motorcycle rapid response police unit)
- DRASI Unit (Action / Rapid Intervention Unit)
- EKAM (Special Counter-Terrorism Unit)
- General Duty Police Officer
- Hellenic Coast Guard
- Judicial Police
- OPKE (Special Crime Suppression Unit)
- Plainclothes Police Officer
- Public transport police
- Riot Police (MAT) / Police Riot Control Units (YAT)

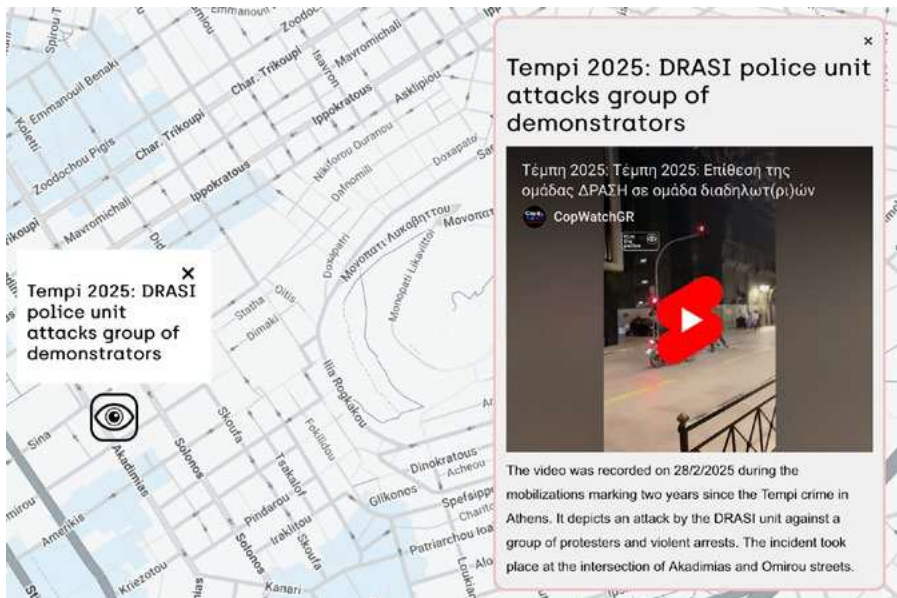
TECHNICAL MEANS

- Baton / truncheon
- Drone
- Firearm
- Flash-bang grenade
- Tear gas
- Water cannon

CONSENT *

I agree to data processing according to the privacy policy

SUBMIT





“can the police...?” frequently asked questions

?

“can the police...?”

... ask me to stop filming because I’m “obstructing their work”?

If you are not obstructing police actions with your body or by other actions, you are not doing anything illegal, and the officer is not entitled to ask you to stop. To be fully covered, avoid filming faces when there is no objectionable act, and limit unnecessary recording.

... remove me from a public space without explaining why?

Yes, they can, by abusively invoking “lawful” reasons (public order, danger, national security, traffic regulations, etc.).

... ask for my details without telling me why?

Yes, they can—and you must provide them. If you don’t, the officer may proceed with a lawful escort (“bringing you in”) to the station.

... search me without a warrant?

In a public space, the police have the right to check your identity and—if there is serious suspicion of an offence or absolute necessity—perform a further search: this may be a pat-down (always by a person of the same gender, and not stripping in public), a search of personal items (bag, wallet), and the inside of your vehicle.

Unfortunately, class, gender, and race are factors that lead to some people being targeted more than others. Roma people, migrant women, and anti-authoritarian activists are groups that are over-policed and constantly subjected to checks. If you belong to such a group, you should know—probably already—that you will be checked more often, more strictly, and more intensely than others. Keep this in mind before getting involved in documenting an incident.

... conduct a body search without a same-gender witness present?

A body search of a female is carried out by a female police officer. If none is available, they may bring you to the station so that the search can be done by a woman officer.

... check my device?

If they ask for your phone, you must hand it over. But if you have a smartphone, you have **no obligation to provide access** to the data stored inside it, as a smartphone is considered partly a computer, and searching files requires a warrant (so you do not have to provide the unlock code, for example). Therefore, for the police to lawfully check the contents of your phone's files, a search warrant is required. For such a warrant to be issued, specific offences would have to be attributed to you, or you would have to be investigated as a suspect in a preliminary inquiry.

... ask for my device passcode during an escort/arrest?

No, you have no obligation. Besides, you might not remember it!

... ask me to delete the video?

You must weigh how important it is not to delete it, and whether you have followed the principles mentioned above. Often, it's worth backing down to avoid criminal prosecution. But if you are sure about your recordings, their value, and their legality, you can refuse.

What you can do is keep a courageous stance, but not a provocative, insolent, or aggressive one. You should ask the reason for everything, and firmly demand respect for your rights. Regarding the footage, you can argue legitimate interest / justified public interest and the capacity in which you were recording.

... copy my device's storage card?

Only in the context of a preliminary investigation for a crime related to recording at the level of a felony, or due to an arrest for something similar.

... record me themselves (bodycam or phone) without informing me?

They are not required to inform you personally: they must inform the public that they are entering an area covered by installed or portable surveillance/recording systems. In practice, if you are being recorded openly, it is lawful.

... keep me without telling me whether I'm being "brought in" or arrested?

If you don't have an ID or there are suspicions that you committed a crime, you may be taken to the station through the procedure of "bringing in." If you did not resist the check and are not under the influence of substances, they are not allowed to handcuff you during a "bringing in." The time required for the station check must be kept as short as possible.

Since digitisation of Hellenic Police operations is a reality, the duration should be very short. If you believe they are holding you without reason, you can calmly protest, saying:

"If you've completed the check and you don't consider me a suspect, let me go; otherwise tell me what offence you attribute to me and let me call my lawyer."

If you have health problems or take medication, you can invoke this to end the ordeal sooner.

If your detention exceeds a reasonable time, officers may be liable for the criminal offence of unlawful detention. You must insistently demand to be released and claim telephone communication with a lawyer.

... refuse to let me call a lawyer?

If they have taken you to the station and start asking you questions about a specific matter, you must request a lawyer. As a person being brought in, you have the right—without unjustified delay—for at least one person of your choice to be informed of your deprivation of liberty. Even if they insist it's "just an apprehension," you still have the right of access to a lawyer.

... seize my phone or camera?

Your device can be lawfully seized only if you have been arrested and an offence has been attributed to you. In that case, if the case file includes your device as an object of investigation, it will be listed in a seizure report. If your device is not part of the case file, it will be held as a personal item in a locker at the holding cells and returned to you with your other belongings when your detention ends.

... force me to sign something?

NO. Don't sign anything before speaking with your lawyer, no matter how harmless or procedural the document may seem.

... not provide an interpreter, even though I don't speak Greek?

Interpretation during your examination and statement, and translation of any document served on you into a language you understand, is the police's obligation. If that is not possible, a statement cannot be taken. Also, if they try to appoint a fellow detainee as interpreter, you have the right—and should—refuse.

what should i do if my device is seized?

Your device can be lawfully seized only if you have been arrested and an offence has been attributed to you. In that case, if the case file includes your device as an object of investigation, it will be mentioned in a seizure report. If not, it will be held as a personal item and returned when your detention ends.

what should i do if my smartphone is seized without a receipt?

Inform your lawyer. They will take the necessary steps.



"Know Your Rights" guide

where can i report abuse or abuse of authority?

The long-standing and well-documented impunity for crimes committed by the Security Forces allows us to hold the view that the sole purpose of existing "complaints mechanisms" is to legitimise cover-ups and to validate a false sense of "legality." Indeed, there are procedures in place for reporting and filing complaints about police misconduct and criminal offences committed by police officers. However, these procedures are designed by the legislator from the outset to be ineffective and to serve a purely symbolic role: they have no real consequences, are time-consuming, and, in practice, the police do not oversee or hold themselves accountable.

Nevertheless, there may be some value in filing such a complaint: namely, the documentation of police violence/misconduct through yet another channel and the production of statistical data that can help confirm the systemic nature of these practices. If you wish to report an incident of police misconduct, you may file a criminal complaint at a police station, with the competent public prosecutor's office, or directly with the Internal Affairs Division of the Security Forces.

If you do not wish to pursue this route, you may submit a report to the National Mechanism for the Investigation of Incidents of Arbitrary Conduct, which operates under the authority of the Greek Ombudsman. The Mechanism will forward your complaint to the Hellenic Police, which is then legally obliged to initiate a Sworn Administrative Investigation. The unit assigned to carry out the investigation must be different from the one to which the reported officer belongs. The outcome of the investigation is then communicated to the Greek Ombudsman.

In its most recent report for 2024, the Greek Ombudsman notes that "despite an increase in the number of cases in which the imposition of a sanction is proposed compared to 2023, in the overwhelming majority of administrative investigations, the recommendation is once again to archive the case."

Finally, before proceeding with any of the above actions, it is advisable to seek legal advice from a lawyer, who can assess which course of action is most appropriate.



self-care

Police violence is distinct and has unique characteristics that make it a decisive risk factor for mental health issues.

People who cover demonstrations journalistically are constantly exposed to potentially traumatic experiences: conditions of intense stress, physical violence or its threat, witnessing violence against others, harassment in the physical or digital world, etc.

They are also exposed, due to the nature of the activity, to secondary trauma, since they must watch, process, and select scenes of violence for publication again and again.

Individuals and communities around these issues rarely talk about the impacts of trauma. It is often considered a sign of “weakness” and is accompanied by shame, so it remains unspoken.

possible signs of trauma from exposure to police violence

Emotional changes:

numbness, disconnection, hopelessness—“nothing matters.” Intense anger, panic, fear, or hypervigilance.

Physical discomfort:

difficulty sleeping or nightmares; appetite changes; headaches; intense fatigue; nausea or stomach discomfort.

Social changes:

avoiding previous activities, friends, groups—especially if related to police violence; anxiety in social interactions.

Signs of burnout:

demands feel unbearable; emotional exhaustion; cynicism; even the work itself is treated as part of the problem.

Resilience doesn't mean you never feel stress or sadness. It means being able to recognise it, recover, and continue.

- Recognise how it affects you. Watch for signs in yourself and those around you. “Listen” to your body and how it signals stress.
- Put the experience into words. Express what you feel. Talk with friends, partners, colleagues; raise the topic in groups you're part of. Break the stigma of “weakness.” Don't isolate—share.
- Take breaks. After intense conditions or traumatic experiences, you need time to rest. If you're not okay, you can't support others either.
- Seek professional help. It's normal at times to feel you can't cope. Therapy can be extremely helpful for processing traumatic events.

legal appendix



basic legal framework for recording, archiving, and publishing

1. constitutional framework

Constitution of Greece

Article 14 – Freedom of expression and the press

Everyone may express and disseminate their thoughts orally, in writing, and through the press, while observing the laws of the State.

Article 9A – Protection of personal data

Everyone has the right to protection from the collection, processing, and use—especially by electronic means—of their personal data, as provided by law.

The protection of personal data is ensured by an independent authority, established and operating as provided by law.



2. european convention on human rights [ECHR]

Article 10 – Freedom of expression

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions and freedom to receive or impart information or ideas without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers.

This article does not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, cinema, or television enterprises.

The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries duties and responsibilities, may be subject to conditions, restrictions, or penalties prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society, in particular for reasons of national security, public order, the prevention of crime, the protection of health or morals, or the protection of the rights of others.

Article 8 – Right to respect for private life

Everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, their home, and their correspondence.

No interference by a public authority is permitted except as provided by law and necessary in a democratic society for reasons of national security, public order, or the protection of the rights of others.



3. general data protection regulation (GDPR) & law 4624/2019

The General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] is the European legal framework governing the collection, storage, and processing of personal data within the EU.

It introduces principles such as transparency, data minimisation, and accountability, and it safeguards rights such as access, rectification, erasure [“the right to be forgotten”], and portability.

Law 4624/2019 incorporated the GDPR into the Greek legal order and, together with criminal legislation, defines the framework for recording, archiving, and publishing incidents of police abuse.

Article 28 – Processing and freedom of expression and information

1. To the extent necessary to reconcile the right to the protection of personal data with the right to freedom of expression and information—including processing for journalistic purposes and for academic, artistic, or literary expression—processing of personal data is permitted when:
 - a) the data subject has provided explicit consent;
 - b) it concerns personal data that has manifestly been made public by the data subject;
 - c) the right to freedom of expression and the right to information prevail over the data subject’s right to protection of personal data, especially for matters of broader public interest or where it concerns personal data of public figures; and
 - d) processing is limited to what is necessary to ensure freedom of expression and the right to information, especially where it concerns special categories of personal data, as well as criminal prosecutions, convictions, and related security measures, taking into account the data subject’s right to private and family life.
2. To the extent necessary to reconcile the right to the protection of personal data with the right to freedom of expression and information—including processing for journalistic purposes and for academic, artistic, or literary expression—the following do not apply:
 - a) GDPR Chapter II “Principles,” except Article 5;
 - b) GDPR Chapter III “Rights of the Data Subject”;
 - c) GDPR Chapter IV “Controller and Processor,” except Articles 28, 29, and 32;

- d) GDPR Chapter V "Transfers of personal data to third countries or international organisations";
- e) GDPR Chapter VII "Cooperation and consistency"; and
- f) GDPR Chapter IX "Provisions relating to specific processing situations."

Article 29 – Processing for archiving purposes in the public interest

1. By way of derogation from GDPR Article 9(1), processing of special categories of personal data is permitted when necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest. The controller must take appropriate and specific measures to protect the data subject's legitimate interests. These measures may include, where feasible:
 - a) access restrictions for controllers and processors;
 - b) pseudonymisation;
 - c) encryption;
 - d) appointment of a Data Protection Officer [DPO].
2. By way of derogation from GDPR Article 15, the data subject's right of access may be restricted if exercising it is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of the purposes in paragraph 1, and if exercising the right would require a disproportionate effort.
3. By way of derogation from GDPR Article 16, the data subject has no right to rectification if exercising it is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of the purposes in paragraph 1 or the exercise of third-party rights.
4. By way of derogation from GDPR Article 18(1)(a), (b) and (d), and from GDPR Articles 20 and 21, data subject rights may be restricted where exercising them is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the purposes in paragraph 1 and the restrictions are deemed necessary to achieve those purposes.

Article 30 – Processing for scientific or historical research or statistical purposes

1. By way of derogation from GDPR Article 9(1), processing of special categories of personal data is permitted without the data subject's consent when necessary for scientific or historical research or for compiling and maintaining statistics, and where the controller's interest prevails over the data subject's interest in not having their personal data processed. The controller must take appropriate and specific measures, which may include:
 - a) access restrictions for controllers and processors;
 - b) pseudonymisation;

- c) encryption;
- d) appointment of a DPO.

2. By way of derogation from GDPR Articles 15, 16, 18, and 21, data subject rights may be restricted where exercising them is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the purposes in paragraph 1 and the restrictions are deemed necessary.

For the same reason, the GDPR Article 15 right of access does not apply when personal data is necessary for scientific purposes and providing information would require disproportionate effort.

3. In addition to paragraph 1, special categories of personal data processed for these purposes must be anonymised as soon as scientific or statistical purposes allow, unless that would conflict with the data subject's legitimate interest. Until then, the identifiers that could be used to match individual details about personal or factual circumstances of an identified or identifiable person must be stored separately. They may be combined with the individual details only if required by the research or statistical purpose.
4. The controller may publish personal data processed in the context of research if the data subjects have provided written consent or if publication is necessary for presenting research results. In the latter case, publication must be carried out using pseudonymisation.



4. criminal law provisions related to recording and publication

Article 38, Law 4624/2019 – Criminal sanctions

1. Anyone who, without right:
 - a) interferes in any way with a personal data filing system and thereby gains knowledge of such data;
 - b) copies, removes, alters, damages, collects, records, organises, structures, stores, adapts, changes, retrieves, searches for information, links, combines, restricts, deletes, or destroys such data,is punished with imprisonment of up to one (1) year, unless the act is punished more severely under another provision.
2. Anyone who uses, transmits, disseminates, communicates by transfer, makes available, announces, or makes accessible to unauthorised persons personal data acquired under paragraph 1(a), or allows unauthorised persons to gain knowledge of such data, is punished with imprisonment, unless punished more severely under another provision.
3. If the act in paragraph 2 concerns special categories of personal data under GDPR Article 9(1) or data relating to criminal convictions/offences or related security measures under GDPR Article 10, the offender is punished with imprisonment of at least one (1) year and a fine of up to one hundred thousand (100,000) euros, unless punished more severely elsewhere.
4. The offender is punished with imprisonment of up to ten (10) years if they acted with the intent to obtain unlawful financial benefit for themselves or another, or to cause financial damage to another, or to harm another, and the total benefit or damage exceeds one hundred twenty thousand (120,000) euros.
5. If acts in paragraphs 1–3 created a risk to the free functioning of the democratic regime or to national security, imprisonment and a fine of up to three hundred thousand (300,000) euros are imposed.

Article 370A Penal Code (Law 4619/2019) – Illegal recording of oral conversation

2. Anyone who unlawfully monitors with special technical means or records on a medium an oral conversation between third parties that is not conducted publicly, or records on a medium another person's non-public act, is punished with imprisonment of up to ten (10) years. The same penalty applies if the perpetrator records on a medium the content of their own conversation with another without that person's explicit consent.

Article 363 Penal Code – Aggravated defamation (slander)

Anyone who, in any way before a third party, asserts or disseminates about another person a fact that they know to be false and which may harm that person's honour or reputation, is punished with imprisonment of at least three (3) months and a fine; and if committed publicly in any way or via the internet, with imprisonment of at least six (6) months and a fine. The notion of "third party" does not include public officials or employees who become aware of the assertions about the litigating parties in the performance of their duties in the context of civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings.

Article 361 Penal Code – Insult

Anyone who, apart from cases of aggravated defamation (Article 363), offends another's honour by word, deed, or any other means, with such intent, is punished with imprisonment of up to six (6) months or a fine. If committed publicly in any way or via the internet, imprisonment of up to one (1) year or a fine is imposed; and if the offence relates to aspects of private or family life, imprisonment of up to two (2) years or a fine is imposed.

Article 8, Law 3090/2002 – Recording inside a courtroom

Para. 1: Total or partial transmission by any means—especially television, radio, the internet, or any technological means—as well as filming, videotaping, audio recording, and transcription of the trial into written text via special software converting speech to text, before a criminal, civil, or administrative court is prohibited. By exception, the court may allow these actions if the prosecutor and the parties consent and there is an essential public interest.

Article 184 Penal Code – Incitement to commit crimes or acts of violence

1. Anyone who publicly, in any way or via the internet, provokes or incites the commission of a misdemeanour or felony, thereby endangering public order, is punished with imprisonment of up to one year or a fine.
2. The same act is punished with imprisonment of up to three years or a fine if it attempts to commit violence against a group or person identified by race, colour, national/ethnic origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics. In this case, Article 82A does not apply.

2A. Anyone who, using information and communication technologies, makes available to the public material containing another person's personal data without their consent, with the aim of inciting others to cause them physical or psychological harm, is punished with imprisonment of up to three (3) years, unless punished more severely under another provision.

3. The acts in the preceding paragraphs are punished with imprisonment if they directly result in the commission of crimes. The same penalty applies to anyone who publicly, in any way or via the internet, provokes or incites citizens to violence against each other or to mutual discord, resulting in a disturbance of public peace under Article 189.

Article 169 Penal Code – Disobedience

Anyone who, following a lawful request, refuses—without resistance—to provide to an official [as per “Article 13, point a”) the service or assistance owed by law, or refuses entry into any place for a lawful official act, is punished with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine.

Article sole para. 5 of Law 1178/1981 (A' 187)

5. The injured party, before filing a lawsuit for the infringement suffered, is obliged to invite, by written extrajudicial notice, the owner of the publication, or, when this person is unknown, the publisher or the editor-in-chief, to remedy the infringement by publishing therein a text indicated by them. In this text, the words or phrases considered offensive and that must be retracted are specified, as well as the reasons for which the specific reference was offensive. The remedy is deemed to have taken place if the owner of the publication, or otherwise the publisher or the editor-in-chief thereof, within a period of ten (10) days or, in any case, in the immediately following issue:

[a) expressly retracts the infringement with the above publication, which is made in the same position or, if this does not exist, in a corresponding position and sheet of the newspaper of the corresponding day of circulation in which the beginning of the objectionable publication had been published, and in an extent and size proportionate to the latter, and
[b) notifies the injured party of the above publication of rectification.
The lapse of the ten (10) day period without action or the non-publication in the immediately following issue is deemed a refusal on the part of the owner or publisher of the publication. The omission of the above procedure results in the dismissal of the lawsuit as inadmissible. The compensation lawsuit of paragraph 2 must be filed within six (6) months from the lapse of the ten (10) day deadline or from the express negative response, if it has been given earlier, or from the issuance of the immediately following issue.

If the remedy of the infringement takes place in accordance with the above, no civil claim may arise under paragraph 2. By way of exception, when the objectionable publication concerned an impending event of major significance for the individual, family, professional, and in general social advancement of the injured party and the remedy of the relevant infringement followed thereafter, the latter may be considered incomplete and the claim for proportionate monetary satisfaction due to moral damage is maintained. If, despite the publication of the retraction, it is proven that property damage has been caused to the injured party attributable to the objectionable publication, the plaintiff is entitled to resort to the competent court solely for this claim. The adjudication of the lawsuit under the present article proceeds independently of the initiation of criminal prosecution for the same act, as well as of any postponement or suspension of the criminal proceedings that have commenced for any reason whatsoever. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply in the exercise of the right of rectification in the cases provided for in Article 9 of Presidential Decree 100/2000 (A' 98).

5. recording of citizens by the police in public spaces

Video surveillance in public spaces is permitted only by a public authority and for specific purposes; private individuals are permitted only in spaces they manage and for the protection of persons/property.

Law 3917/2011 – Article 14

Use of surveillance systems with the capture or recording of sound or image in public spaces

1. The installation and operation of surveillance systems capturing or recording sound or image in public spaces, insofar as it involves processing personal data, is permitted only for:
 - a) safeguarding national defence;
 - b) protecting the constitutional order and preventing treason-related crimes;
 - c) preventing and suppressing crimes that threaten public order;
 - d) preventing and suppressing crimes of violence, drug trafficking, commonly dangerous crimes, crimes against transport safety, and crimes against property, where there are sufficient indications based on real facts that such acts have been or are about to be committed; and
 - e) traffic management.

2. The installation and operation of surveillance systems in public spaces is carried out only by state authorities, observing the principle of proportionality.
3. Public spaces, for the purposes of the above, are:
 - a) spaces intended for common use under applicable law and city plans;
 - b) open spaces freely accessible to an indeterminate number of persons (fenced or not) lawfully made available for common use; and
 - c) passenger transit stations for public mass transport.
4. By presidential decree issued on the proposal of the Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the competent Minister, following the opinion of the Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDPA), there are defined: competent authorities; procedures and conditions for installation/operation; proportionality criteria; types of personal data processed; collection, storage, use, transfer and recipients; retention time; destruction procedure; organisational and technical security measures; core functions and periodic evaluation; data subject rights and remedies; notification of processing; HDPA oversight; and any related matter, in line with the basic principles of Law 2472/1997.

6. presidential decree 75/2020 – surveillance systems

Article 2 – Surveillance systems

The provisions of this decree apply to surveillance systems regardless of technical specifications (analog/digital), whether cameras are fixed, rotating, or mobile; mounted on fixed bases; portable and carried by vehicles of any kind (land, sea, or air; manned or unmanned) or by natural persons; or whether any other electronic device/system is used, and regardless of the type of image capture (continuous or intermittent). These systems include, in particular, closed-circuit television with additional equipment for transmission, storage, and further processing of image and sound.

Article 3 – Purposes of processing

The installation and operation of surveillance systems capturing or recording sound or image in public spaces is permitted, in accordance with Article 14(1) of Law 3917/2011, for:

- a) prevention and suppression of punishable acts referred to in Article 14(1)(b)–(d) of Law 3917/2011. This includes, in particular, offences in chapters 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 23 of the Special Part of the Penal Code and felonies under drug-dependence legislation. Suppression also includes proving the commission of punishable acts and identifying the perpetrator.
- b) traffic management, including responding to emergencies on the road network, regulating vehicle flow, and preventing/managing traffic accidents.

Conditions and criteria for installation and operation

1. Surveillance systems in public spaces are permitted only to the extent necessary, and when the aims of crime prevention/suppression and traffic management cannot be achieved equally effectively by other milder measures. The decision issued under Article 12(1) must specifically justify that legal conditions are met for surveillance of a specific area. For prevention/suppression, sufficient indications must exist that crimes listed in Article 3 are being or are about to be committed in that specific area. Such indications must be justified with factual elements such as statistical/empirical data, studies, reports, testimonies, and information on frequency/type/characteristics of crimes, and the likely displacement of crime to another public space. Surveillance is deemed necessary when these factual elements form

a reasonable belief that serious risks to public safety threaten the specific public spaces.

2. Surveillance is limited to the specific area deemed necessary and may not extend to a wider region. The controller must ensure, using suitable technical means, that systems monitor the predetermined area and do not capture images from non-public spaces or the interior of homes. Details on camera placement and system characteristics are set out in the decision under Article 12[1]. The decision under Article 12[2] sets activation time, range, and duration of operation to ensure compliance with necessity.
3. Portable surveillance systems may operate where there is an immediate serious risk of commission of punishable acts listed in Article 3, following a relevant decision of the controller issued under Article 12[2]. The decision must specifically justify the conditions for portable surveillance with reference to specific factual elements.
4. Zooming/focusing of the image is permitted for establishing punishable acts within the permitted purposes. The process of focusing and returning is carried out by a reasoned decision of the controller, following approval by the competent public prosecutor. In urgent cases, focusing may be carried out by a reasoned decision with immediate notification to the prosecutor, who may prohibit continuation and the use of collected data. In all cases, compliance with focusing conditions is evidenced by the action logs kept under Article 11. The prosecutor may request additional information at any time to check legality. Capturing images of any third person is permitted insofar as necessary to achieve the processing purpose.

Article 9 - Recipients of the data**

1. The recipients of the data may be the judicial, prosecutorial, or administrative authorities competent for each specific purpose. The data controller or the data processors are permitted to transmit the data, for the purpose of proving a criminal offence, to the victim or to the alleged perpetrator of the act, following the submission of a relevant request, provided that the applicant demonstrates that the transmission is necessary for the establishment, exercise, or support of legal claims.
2. The data controller and those involved in the processing ensure, by appropriate technical means, that the transmitted images cannot be altered in an imperceptible manner. The material disclosed to the recipients is relevant, appropriate, and strictly necessary for achieving the intended purposes. Under the responsibility of the data controller and those involved in the processing, all necessary measures are taken to ensure the secure transmission of the data, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 46 of Law 4624/2019. For each instance of disclosure of the data to another administrative authority, the relevant approval of the public prosecutor to whom the decision on the installation and operation of the surveillance systems had been notified is required.

7. public outdoor assemblies

Law 4703/2020 – Article 6

Public outdoor assemblies

1. The installation and operation of fixed, rotating, or mobile surveillance systems (as in Article 2) in areas and during the holding of a public outdoor assembly is permitted by a specifically reasoned decision of the controller, after approval by the competent public prosecutor, provided it has been notified to the organiser and participants, and only for the purposes referred to in Article 3. The decision includes both the factual elements supporting necessity of surveillance and those determining activation time and duration.
2. Capturing an image for full oversight of the assembly to determine its size and route, without the ability to zoom in on individuals, is permitted exclusively to fulfil the purposes of Article 3 and only if necessary for the smooth conduct of the assembly.
3. Data collected under this article are automatically destroyed, under the controller's responsibility, within forty-eight [48] hours after the end of the assembly, provided it developed and ended peacefully and no critical incident within the processing purpose was captured. Otherwise, the provisions of Article 8 apply by analogy.

Credits

Educational material development

Georgios Pouloupoulos
John Malamatinas

Legal drafting

Spyros Tzouanopoulos

Graphic Design

Muenzenberg GmbH

Funded by



Supported by



This guide draws on the practices and methodologies developed by organisations and initiatives working on the documentation of police violence, including, but not limited to, Witness, Tactical Tech, Forensic Architecture, Bellingcat, Amnesty International, and copwatching initiatives in Europe and the United States.

Contact email: filmthepolice@copwatch.gr

Copyright 2026 © CopwatchGR